EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

FOR THE DANVERS FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research project was undertaken to provide a solution to problems facing the

Danvers Fire Department regarding employee morale and anxiety concerning individual job

performance, job descriptions, and the effects of these on the future of department personnel. A

uniform method to evaluate, communicate, and exchange performance evaluations, in a non-

threatening manner, did not exist. The purpose of this research was: (a) to determine reasons for

conducting employee evaluations; (b) to review existing employee evaluation programs; and (c)

to develop an employee evaluation program for the department.

Historical research techniques were employed to: (a) review why employee evaluations

should be performed; (b) research common types of employee evaluations; and (c) learn the

advantages and disadvantages of each method. Action research techniques were used to develop

an employee evaluation program from the preceding information that would be acceptable to the

department management, the union leadership, and union members.

The research questions asked were:

1.   Why perform employee evaluations?

2.   What types of Employee Evaluation Programs are commonly used?

3.   What does an Employee Evaluation Program typically include?

A literature review was conducted to examine types of employee evaluations and the

benefits thereof, while examples of existing performance evaluation programs were collected

from reference books, businesses and municipalities. The review of this documentation, led to

the creation of an employee evaluation program for the Danvers Fire Department consisting of

elements from various types of evaluation programs.

This research led to the conclusions that there are valid reasons to conduct evaluations,

that there are many variations of evaluations styles and methods available, and that many

evaluation programs are a mix of these various methods. As a result of this research project, an

evaluation program tailored to meet the needs of the Danvers Fire Department was assembled

and recommendations were made to: (a) review the program with union leadership; (b) conduct

supervisor and employee training; and (c) implement the Employee Evaluation Program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Danvers Fire Department (DFD) was a structured organization established by an act passed in the Massachusetts General Court in March 1830 and began printing yearly regulations in 1831. Although the department is over 170 years old and structured in a paramilitary style, new members often were unsure and confused about their job performance status. They often questioned their job descriptions and wondered how personnel evaluations could effect promotions. This confusion and questioning had its origins in the 1970's with the evolution of new theories in public administration. The "new public administration" systems theory and critical theory introduced in the 1970's can be thought of as a type of "participative management." The confusion that resulted from these theories and the role changes advocated by new employees caused confrontation between senior department members, management, and newly hired firefighters (Coleman & Granito, 1988). At the same time, within the Danvers Fire Department, there was no program in place for conducting any type of employee evaluation and no job description was provided to the individual employee. Management did not fully practice an Enlightened Management Policy nor did it believe all of Maslow's assumptions about employees (Maslow, 1998). The department was undergoing a change of management beliefs from a strictly authoritarian military style of management to employee participative management and this resulted in confusion and misunderstandings among the members. There was internal department concern about the future facing the fire department, job responsibilities, tight budgets, the possibility of future layoffs, the evolving changes facing all fire departments as emergency fire calls diminish, and a general lack of internal communication, all of which, combined with vague job descriptions created an atmosphere that was not conducive to personal or departmental growth. A problem facing the Danvers Fire Department was that an Employee

Evaluation Program (EEP) containing specific job descriptions did not exist; management and employees did not have a uniform method to evaluate, communicate, and exchange performance evaluations in a non-adversarial climate. The purpose of this research project was to review existing EEPs and to develop an EEP that can be implemented within the Danvers Fire Department after a negotiated agreement with the local firefighters union is reached. Historical and action research techniques were used to answer the following research questions:

1.   Why perform employee evaluations?

2.   What types of Employee Evaluation Programs are commonly used?

3.   What does an Employee Evaluation Program typically include?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Town of Danvers is located in northeastern Massachusetts, bordered by the cities of Salem on the southeast, Beverly on the east, Peabody on the south, and the towns of Middleton on the west and Topsfield on the north. Danvers is 17 miles north of Boston, the capital city of Massachusetts. The total land area is 13.28 sq. miles, with a population of 24,174 and a density of 1,820 per sq. mile. The form of government is Representative Town Meeting with an elected Board of Selectmen and appointed Town Manager. Danvers was founded in 1750 and incorporated as a town in 1757. The Town ranks above the state median in terms of Household Income, Per Capita Income, and Educational Attainment (Executive Office of Communities & Development, 1995). Danvers consists of a mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, and educational facilities along with a mid-sized enclosed shopping mall and downtown shopping area. Additionally, there are several national brand chain stores scattered along the Highway Corridor District. Several major interstate highways, a railroad line, high-pressure gas pipeline,

regional airport, and numbered state highways intersect in Danvers. There are no areas of urban decay sometimes found in older New England cities and towns. All buildings constructed in Type IV Construction (heavy timber) that could contribute to a fire problem have been converted to sprinklers or torn down (Cote, 1997). The Town could be considered a bedroom community with easy access to Boston for commuters working in the capital city.

The Danvers Fire Department was established in March 1830, by an act passed in the Massachusetts General Court. That act read in part:

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That the inhabitants of the Town of Danvers, at their annual meeting for the choice of Town Officers shall choose by ballot, twelve persons as Firewards in said Town.

Sec. 3. Be it further enacted, That the said Firewards be, and they are hereby authorized, if they shall judge it expedient, to nominate and appoint, any number of Enginemen, in addition to the number now authorized by law, not exceeding in the whole, forty men for each and every hydraulion, or suction Engine, four men to each Hose Carriage, twenty men to each Sail Carriage, and twenty men to be employed as a Hook and Ladder Company, and the said Enginemen are authorized to organize themselves into distinct companies, under the direction of the Firewards: to elect directors, clerks, and other officers; to establish such rules and regulations as may be approved by the Firewards, and to annex penalties to the same which may be recovered by the Clerk of any company so organized, before any Justice of the Peace in the County of Essex: Provided, that no penalty shall exceed the sum of ten dollars; and that such rules and regulations shall not be repugnant to the Constitution and the laws of this Commonwealth.

By 1831, the department was a structured organization and printing yearly regulations. The introduction of the Danvers water system in 1877 had a profound effect upon the fire department. Water pressure from 200 new hydrants strategically located around town eliminated the need for man-powered engines within the fire department. Some motorized equipment was purchased, volunteer numbers were reduced, and the department was on its way to becoming a full-time professional fire department. In 1925, the Danvers Fire Department became fully motorized and, due to special committees established by 1923 town meetings, Joseph E. Kelly, Sr. of Charlestown, Massachusetts became the first permanent chief of the Danvers Fire Department (Martin, 1997). At a talk given to the Danvers Rotary Club on May 21, 1925, Chief Kelly suggested that the town accept certain legislation to upgrade the fire alarm system and that all members of the department undergo a regular schedule of training drills. The Chief told Rotarians, "the recommendations of the local fire committee and of the insurance exchange (which set the local insurance rates) will be used as a guide to improve the department" (Martin, 1997, p. 50).

> Under some conditions and situations it may be difficult to believe that there are standards that fire departments as a whole are governed by. But there are. The New England Fire Insurance Rating Association (NEFIRA), an organization financially supported by the insurance companies doing business in the region, dictates these standards. The Association employs experts like hydraulic, structural, and traffic engineers and building inspectors, all of whom have surveyed Danvers on at least three different years 1927, 1936, and 1966. These people spend approximately seven days studying the fire defenses of the community, making various recommendations for

improvements, and then giving the town or city a grade that its fire insurance rate is based on (Martin, 1997, p. 55).

Throughout the history of the Danvers Fire Department, there had always been a public commitment made by town administrations and department management to be the finest fire department possible. This commitment was maintained by keeping pace with the technological advances in firefighter training, purchasing of firefighting equipment, implementing the recommendations of the NEFIRA, and maintaining department personnel. Unfortunately, an area where the department had not seen much in the way of advancement was personnel development. Department morale suffered because of a lack of means for employees and management to discuss job performance and the effect of performance upon promotional status. There were no clear job descriptions assigned and individuals were unsure of their range of responsibilities. When a firefighter was promoted to an officer rank there was no personnel development training provided during or after the transition.

All these factors negatively affected the department and the relationship between management and members. New projects were often delayed because many department members did not provide input because they believed it would not be seriously considered. Existing policies and procedures were often ignored because no one was sure who was in charge of what. New technology was not fully utilized because members and management could not adapt and assign individuals to new tasks without lengthy union negotiations. The department commitment to excellence was fine in theory but flawed in practice. The Danvers Fire Department was in danger of losing the respect of its members and, in turn, the respect of the citizens. The department believed that the establishment of an Employee Evaluation Program

would open lines of communication and start to correct some of the internal problems faced by the department.

This applied research project was completed as a required component of the *Executive Development* (ED) class in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP). Professional development was studied as part of that class and manager development, rather than management development, is now considered crucial to the success of the future of the Danvers Fire Department due to changes in emergency response patterns and the evolution of new beliefs in personnel practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phrases "Performance Appraisal System" and "Performance Evaluation System" will be used interchangeably with "Employee Evaluation Program" throughout the remainder of this project because many authors and reference works use the terms interchangeably.

Several authors have addressed the question of "Why perform employee evaluations?" Douglas McGregor, in 1957, wrote that performance appraisal programs have three purposes, one for the organization and two for the individual:

- They provide systematic judgments to back up salary increases, promotions, transfers, and sometimes demotions and terminations;

- They are a means of telling a subordinate how he is doing and suggesting needed changes in behavior, attitude, skills, or job knowledge; they let him know "where he stands" with the boss; and

- They are also increasingly being used as a basis for the coaching and counseling of the individual by the superior.

In 1970, Levinson listed the following purposes for performance appraisal, while specifically emphasizing the importance of clarification of job requirements and performance expectations:

- To measure and judge performance;

- To relate individual performance to organizational goals;

- To foster the increasing competence and growth of the subordinate;

- To stimulate the subordinate's motivation;

- To enhance communications between supervisor and subordinate;

- To serve as a basis for judgments about salary and promotions; and

- To serve as a device for organizational control and integration.

According to Halloran & Frunzi (1986), there are five answers to the question of "Why perform employee evaluations?" First, supervisors need to determine whether their subordinates are doing their jobs. Second, there is a need to measure each employee's performance to reward those who are doing well. Third, supervisors need to establish corrective action plans for those employees whose job performance falls short of expectation. Fourth, supervisors must measure an employee's potential for possible promotion. And fifth, they need to assess an employee's attitude and to deepen their own understanding of their subordinates. In essence, evaluations can be an aid to improve motivation and productivity and can assist in career development for the employee (Coleman & Granito, 1988).

In 1992, Kreitner and Kinicki offered the following reasons for and uses of employee appraisals, listed in order of diminishing importance:

- Salary administration;

- Performance feedback;

- Identifying individual strengths and weaknesses;

- Documenting personnel decisions;

- Recognition of individual performance;

- Identifying poor performance;

- Assisting in goal identification;

- Promotion decisions;

- Retention or termination of employees; and

- Evaluating goal achievement.

In typical performance evaluation programs, supervisors and subordinates share responsibility for establishing goals and expectations and for the measurement of individual accomplishments. The supervisor will then judge how far performance has gone towards meeting the goals and expectations (Bruns, 1992). This process can create a great deal of anxiety for employees and supervisors. Most supervisors do not like the idea of playing "God" with employees, especially when promotions or pay adjustments result from the evaluation. Confronting inappropriate behavior or unsatisfactory performance is also an area where some supervisors have difficulty. The reluctance that supervisors feel in confronting these areas often results from a lack of knowledge about the purposes of employee evaluations and the discussions that naturally arise from them. There are at least two goals involved in performance improvement discussions. The first is to solve the problem and the second is to maintain a positive relationship between supervisor and employee (Grote, 1996). To lessen the employee's anxiety, the employee must be included in the development of the evaluation system. Employee ownership of the program must be built and information must be communicated as to how the system will work.

<u>Types of Performance Appraisals</u>

While there are many Employee Evaluation Programs or Performance Appraisal Systems available, the approaches taken usually fall into one of the following areas: performer (the employee) based appraisals, behavior (the actions taken by the employee) based appraisals, or results (the accomplishments of the employee) based appraisals (Grote, 1996). A brief overview of each type is given here for the reader's benefit, with more detail offered elsewhere in this paper.

In 1996, Grote wrote that evaluations should focus on the performer (employee), the situation, the behavior (employee's), and the result. Each of these is an important area of the evaluation but, the job situation, which is usually critical to the success of the job, is usually never the primary focus of the appraisal. Formal situation analysis is rarely included on a performance appraisal form but must be considered as a factor in the evaluation process.

Classic performer-focused appraisals forget what an employee does, and ignore what results are produced and instead focus on the individual employee's character traits. "What kind of person is he/she?" and "What are the traits of the employee?" are the issues that are addressed.

Behavior-Based Appraisals focus on performance not on the performer (employee). Skills and competencies of the employee are evaluated, not the individual character traits. This approach is far more valid when conducting strictly performance-based evaluations.

The Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) is a departure from other styles of appraisals and leads to a "significantly higher level of sophistication" (Grote, 1996, p. 46). The BARS approach is to evaluate a specific job, which gives this system its great strength. The initial work that must be done to identify all dimensions that are important to the job, the initial expense, and the training requirements are all major shortcoming of the system.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is the most common of the results- based appraisal systems. MBO is considered to be more than an employee evaluation program, it is considered to be a philosophy that guides the organization in all areas. Employee participation is a key element of MBO as well as a focus on the future rather than dwelling on the past. MBO requires open two-way communication at all levels of the organization (Grote, 1996).

The Narrative Essay system is probably the simplest evaluation system. The evaluator describes, in essay form, the strengths and weaknesses, achievements, potential, and development needs. Like the other systems, the Narrative Essay system has strengths and weakness of its own (Grote, 1996).

Elements of an Employee Evaluation Program

The essence of a formal employee evaluation process involves an assessment of employee performance against pre-established standards or criteria (Pope, 1992). The process can create a great deal of anxiety for supervisors and employees unless the process is clearly written, understood by all involved, applied fairly, and equitably throughout the entire organization. Any employee evaluation must consist of more than a checklist form rating the employee based on some unwritten standards or undocumented job performance. The organization must develop a strategy, articulate, and communicate a direction before any assessment of individuals is done. Grote (1996) states that the supervisor and employee should meet prior to any formal assessment and come to an agreement in these areas:

- The key accountabilities of the employee's job;

- The specific objectives of the employee;

- The standards to be used to evaluate achievement of objectives;

- The performance factors, competencies, or behaviors used to achieve results; and

- The steps of a development plan for the employee to complete during the year.

An employee evaluation program should consist of accurate, current job descriptions, provision for evaluation training for evaluation training for both supervisors and employee counseling sessions, feedback sessions, some type of evaluation form or checklist, and an appeal process. In general the following steps are completed in the appraisal process:

- Establish performance standards;

- Communicate performance expectations to employees;

- Measure actual performance;

- Compare actual performance with standards;

- Discuss the appraisal with the employee; and

- Initiate corrective actions, if necessary.

It is important to note that the process is designed as a means for two-way communication between supervisor and employee. Information must be received and understood by both employee and supervisor. The employee has an active role in the process and if any performance measures are vague or unclear, or if the employee lacks confidence that their efforts will not lead to a fair appraisal, there will be a unsatisfactory payoff for the organization at appraisal time and it can be expected that individuals will work below their potential (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1988).

Some type of printed evaluation form is necessary to record results of the evaluation. This form may be a simple one-page checklist or a multiple-paged report detailing specific circumstances and events. Each organization has its own requirements and needs, so there is no one standard form in use. To be of any practical value, any evaluation form should include the following basic information, name, job title, work division, social security number, evaluation period, job description, evaluator's name, and any basic identification needed of the employee.

Other categories of information may include, major achievements and contributions, attendance record, developmental needs, personal goals, supervisor comments, employee comments, potential of employee, and space for supervisor and employee signatures (Grote, 1996).

Summation of Literature Review

The volumes of published information concerning Employee Evaluation Programs or Performance Appraisal Systems all indicate that no one appraisal system is the best for all circumstances.   They also indicate that most organizations have some type of formal appraisal system. DeCenzo and Robbins (1988) state that between 50 and 75 percent of all organizations has some type of formal evaluation system. Another factor learned that directly influenced this project was that performance appraisals have uses other than employee performance evaluation. In 1988, DeCenzo and Robbins stated, "These uses and their percentage of use are as follows: compensation (86%), counseling (65%), training and development (64%), promotion (45%), planning (43%), retention and discharge (30%), and validation (17%)."

According to Armstrong and Lorentzen (1982) these appraisal methods, and combinations and variations of them, are the main types currently in use and Managing Fire Services (Coleman & Granito, 1988) states that they should share the following general characteristics:

- The system is based on a job analysis;

- The purpose of the system is clearly defined;

- The system is based on job-related behavior and clearly defined performance standards;

- Appraisals are conducted on an ongoing basis;

- Appraisers receive extensive training in the use of appraisal techniques and in counseling employees;

- Provision is made for appraisal discussion and positive feedback. Performance strengths and weakness are clearly spelled out along with a clear plan of action of what is needed to correct faults and improve performance; and

- There is a clear link between good performance and a reward system.

A review of various existing Employee Evaluation Programs was conducted as part of the Literature Review section of this Applied Research Project (See Appendixes A and B). This review led to the conclusion that a standard appraisal program does not exist due to the many different factors that industries and service organizations may decide to evaluate as well as the many different methods of evaluation available. There is, however, general information as well as job specific requirements that should be included in the form. This information includes, but is not limited to; employee name, title, evaluation date, supervisor's name, areas to be evaluated, job descriptions, goals, an area for comments, an area for signatures, and an area explaining the evaluation appeal process. The Employee Evaluation Programs included for review were not selected by any special criteria other than as examples of some of the diverse forms that exist. These forms can range from simple one-page checklists to multiple-paged reports that are weighted and scored by professional evaluators.

As this project progressed, it became clear that the Danvers Fire Department would benefit in the area of personnel management and employee development by implementing some form of Employee Evaluation Program. A review of the findings of others indicated that the process of employee evaluation could create a great deal of anxiety for employees and supervisors. As Lazer and Wikstrom wrote in 1977, "Supervisors don't like playing God." The organization also faces a paradox with employee evaluations because the evaluation is a management tool critical to productivity, yet it can actually impair employees' performance

(English, 1991). Two common factors were seen in researching performance evaluations. First, performance evaluations are here to stay. The majority of organizations use some type of performance appraisal program. Second, there is widespread dissatisfaction with almost everything connected to employee appraisals. Supervisors and employees do not feel comfortable with the process and most organizations do not give it the proper weight, regardless of their talk about its importance (Grote, 1996).

PROCEDURES

This research project was undertaken by gathering and then reviewing literature and articles from existing sources. These sources included local fire departments, businesses, local public governments, and the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) program. The Employee Evaluation Programs from private industry, fire departments, and general government were collected for examination and review. One of the stated purposes of this research paper was to determine why employee evaluation programs should be conducted. After all the articles and books were reviewed, it was clear from the data gathered that employee evaluations should be conducted and that such evaluations impart a definite value to the employee and organization (Bruns, 1992; DeCenzo, & Robbins, 1988; Grote, 1996; Halloran, & Frunzi, 1986). Sections were then selected from different styles of evaluation programs to create an evaluation program to meet the needs of the Danvers Fire Department. These styles or types of evaluation programs include Performer-Focused Appraisals, Behavior-Based Appraisals, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales, Management by Objectives, and Narrative Essays (Grote, 1996). A committee comprised of management and employees was then selected to complete the actual Danvers Fire Department Employee Evaluation Program. Historical research methods were used to collect

data and information from the published books and magazines. The information was sorted and categorized into separate areas of research. These areas are included in the research questions, "Why perform employee evaluations?" "What types of Employee Evaluations are commonly used?" and "What does an Employee Evaluation Program typically include?" The action research techniques of defining, prioritizing strategies, setting objectives, and developing step-by-step action implementation plans were then used to accomplish the established goal of developing an employee evaluation program for the Danvers Fire Department.

RESULTS

The information obtained through this research was used to provide answers to the following research questions as well as supply the necessary information and means to create an Employee Evaluation Program for use by the Danvers Fire Department.

Answers to Research Questions

Research question 1. The answer to the question "Why perform employee evaluations?" can be summarized into the following statements:

- They provide continuous improvement to the effectiveness and efficiency of services;

- They provide an opportunity for two-way communication and planning between supervisor and employee;

- They assist the employee in increasing his/her effectiveness;

- They serve as a basis for acknowledging and recognizing the employee's accomplishments, as well as recognizing the employee's potential need for guidance, training and support;

- They provide a mechanism for the establishment of management and employee goals;

- They provide documentation to serve as a basis for salary adjustment and personnel actions; and

- They enhance morale when employees see that they are meeting or exceeding their goals and that all are accountable.

Research question 2. The answer to the question "What types of Employee Evaluation Programs are commonly used?" is that there are three types of employee evaluation programs commonly used:

- Performer-Based Appraisals;

- Behavior-Based Appraisals; and

- Results-Based Appraisals.

Within these three general types, there is a variation of evaluation programs and systems. Examples of organizations that use one type exclusively are rare; most use a combination of methods (Grote, 1996).

Research question 3. The answer to the question "What does an Employee Evaluation Program typically include?" is that an employee evaluation program can be broken into separate sections:

- Clear and concise job descriptions;

- An overview or policy description of the evaluation process;

- An explanation of the rating system to be used; and

- The evaluation form itself.

As a result of the information obtained during the research completed for this paper, an Employee Evaluation Program was designed for the Danvers Fire Department. The EEP designed consists of four distinct parts. First, job descriptions were listed and defined (See

Appendix C). This section of the EEP includes a comprehensive description of the duties and requirements for each employee rank from firefighter to Captain. The duties and requirements were taken from several sources, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Civil Service standards and the Town of Danvers requirements for firefighter and officer responsibilities. The second, an Employee Evaluation Overview Guide (See Appendix D) was written to explain the evaluation process to the evaluators and employees. A committee of management and employees was selected to complete this document to ensure that there was agreement about the evaluation process and to get input from everyone involved. The third part, consisting of an Employee Evaluation Review Form Guide (See Appendix E), was created to explain the evaluation review form. It provides greater detail about the evaluation and the rating system employed. The fourth, and last, part of the employee evaluation program is the review form that is used by the evaluator and employee to conduct the evaluation (See Appendix F).

An unexpected finding of this research project was the number of private and public organizations that use some form of employee evaluation system. Research also revealed that many companies are now considering instituting an "upward input" process where the employee evaluates the performance of the supervisor. Also, it is expected that companies will increasingly use peer and team evaluations to conduct evaluations (Grote, 1996).

DISCUSSION

It seems clear that employee evaluations are not an isolated event, but rather a process that is undertaken by the organization and the employee. Each participant must play an active role if they wish to successfully complete the evaluation in a meaningful manner. The purpose of an employee evaluation program is to assist employees in learning what is expected of them on the job, as well as to ensure that they have the proper tools and equipment to complete their duties. A well-planned evaluation system will also define how the employee's performance will be evaluated and give a description of job duties. It will also contribute to the mission, goals, and objectives of the organization (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1999). While it is clear that evaluation appraisals are here to stay, there is widespread dissatisfaction with most aspects of the evaluation process (Grote, 1996). In fact there are books published that are devoted solely to providing positive phrases for the supervisor to describe the employee. By simply altering phrases, it is possible to describe areas in need of improvement in a positive fashion. For example, "you try to do it all yourself" can be put as "you can excel by delegating routine tasks to subordinates" (Neal, 1994). Despite the many sources of information available that all speak to the fact that employee evaluations are beneficial, widespread and a valuable management tool, employee evaluations cause anxiety, stress, and fear for the evaluator and employee.

If the employees and management could realize the benefits that result as an outcome of a well-planned performance evaluation program, the dissatisfaction in conducting evaluations could be eliminated or greatly reduced. Performance appraisals offer a number of benefits and opportunities to those involved. First, they provide an opportunity to view the job from two different viewpoints, employee and employer. Second, they provide a method by which needs and priorities are identified and agreed on. Third, they provide a format that allows for

concentration on objectives to be met. Fourth, they provide a means for the employee to see the "big picture." Fifth, they focus on problems and obstacles that require a solution and lastly, they provide a means of accountability (Moglia, 1997).

The ideal evaluation cycle consists of a process that begins only after the organization has established its corporate plans and decided its direction. Top management must support and be role models for the process to have any chance of success. Open communication with all employees is necessary; organizational goals and evaluation system information should be provided to reduce the anxiety that they may feel. Training should be provided to appraisers and appraisees alike. Supervisors and employees must be taught to set objectives, identify behaviors, track and measure performance, allocate responsibility, and be taught coaching and interpersonal skills. The evaluation system must be integrated into the organizational objectives and must link to the individual, team, or department objectives, and the overall business strategy. Finally, the evaluation system will be effective only if managers are held accountable for using it effectively (Grote, 1996).

Each evaluation program has advantages and disadvantages. The performer-based appraisal system approach is to use a trait scale. The organization identifies a group of traits or characteristics that it assumes will lead to good job habits and practices. It does not consider work results, or what the employee does on the job. Trait assessment has many deficiencies and would probably not survive any legal scrutiny. Additionally, performer-based evaluations can create negative feelings along with anger. If a supervisor evaluates an employee and tells him/her that he/she lacks leadership qualities, or is not professional, or is not sufficiently adaptable, what happens next? Some traits or characteristics cannot be changed; the employee may be doing a good job but does not have the traits or characteristics the company deems

valuable. The employee is likely to resent his/her evaluation and job performance may suffer.

Peter Drucker (1973) wrote:

> An employer has no business with a man's personality. Employment is a specific
>
> contract calling for specific performance and nothing else. Any attempt of an employer
>
> to go beyond this is usurpation. It is abuse of power. An employee owes no "loyalty," he
>
> owes no "love," and no "attitudes" he owes performance and nothing else.

There is a place in human resources management for assessment of an individual's traits

and characteristics but it is more in the initial interviewing and hiring process. It is important to

try and fit new employees into the culture of the company but the evaluation and assessment of

an individual's traits and characteristics should not be the supervisor's mission (Grote, 1996).

A more valid and important approach to evaluations is the Behavior-Based Appraisal.

Performance factors are identified and included on the appraisal form and the supervisor rates the

employee on these factors. Definitions and descriptions of the performance factors are given to

the evaluator as well as some type of value scale. Employees should be fully aware of the

performance factors as well as how the factors will be scaled during the evaluation. This type of

evaluation system does not place the greatest emphasis upon results but rather on the actions that

have taken place during the work process. When sufficiently communicated to all participants,

this system is an effective part of the total evaluation system. The disadvantages of this type of

evaluation system are the time and cost of training evaluators, and the possibility that some

employees may not be fully aware of the process and job performance factors that they are being

evaluated on until the actual evaluation meeting with their supervisor.

A notable departure from other rating systems, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales

(BARS) takes analysis of performance factors to a much higher level. BARS appraisals are

designed to rate a specific job. Developed in 1963, the process has both worker and supervisor identify all of the important aspects for effective performance of a specific job whether it is chief executive officer (CEO) or receptionist. This aspect of the system is both one of its strengths and also a major weakness. According to Grote (1996), the advantages of a BARS appraisal system are:

- High degree of rater and ratee acceptability; people believe that the system is fair because they are involved in identifying the aspects for performance of the job and the process is job-related.

- High degree of reliability and validity. It measures what it sets out to measure and different raters who observe the same performance, will have similar ratings.

- It promotes good communications. Since the focus is on describing and reviewing actual examples of behavior, conversations tend to be less defensive and likely to promote behavior changes.

- There is a tendency to produce more immediate performance improvements. People's performance improves once they are told exactly what the critical aspects of their jobs are and they are provided with examples of what the organization considers to be superior performance.

With all the advantages of the BARS, there are also many problems to performing employee evaluations with this type of appraisal system. In fact, due to the problems associated with BARS, few organizations use the formal BARS procedures. These problems include:

- Rating behavior of either terrific or terrible performance is easy to do but when trying to evaluate performance that is simply acceptable-neither good or bad-is sometimes difficult.

- It can be hard to develop job criteria that are complete and do not overlap. If the differences between job categories are not clear, the rater will tend to apply the same ratings to everyone.

- Extensive logs of employee behavior must be kept by the supervisor, requiring discipline and time.

- BARS appraisal systems are very expensive to construct. Each organization must have their own specific form, they cannot be purchased off the shelve and a separate BARS form must be created for each job.

- Extensive appraiser training is required. Supervisors must become skilled in making fine behavior observations, judgments, and opinions about what someone has done from the actual behavior itself.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is probably the most common of the results-based performance appraisal systems currently in use. Credited to Peter Drucker, MBO strives to bring together the goals of management while also allowing the employee to fulfill personal goals at the same time. It can be argued that MBO is more than an evaluation system; it is also a management philosophy-a set of beliefs about how an organization is organized, managed, and controlled. As a philosophy, Management by Objectives is concerned with the future rather than the past. Planning and managing the future of the organization rather than reacting to the past is the key to MBO. A great deal of emphasis is placed on employee participation and the system is focused on accomplishments and results, not on personal traits and behavior.

MBO provides a way to manage an organization by providing a step-by-step process for ensuring organizational excellence and desired results. MBO is also a system that provides a means for planning, evaluating, and controlling the organization (Grote, 1996). In 1984,

Bernadin and Beatty wrote " Perhaps Drucker's greatest contribution was that he did not assume that managers know what their goals are, but instead made goal setting explicit." The employee and supervisor meet and come to a joint agreement upon goals to be met. Milestones or performance standards are agreed upon to measure accomplishment of the agreed on objective. Time frames for completion of the milestones or performance standards are set and resource needs are determined. The individual employee is then free to monitor his/her own performance toward completion within the agreed on guidelines. MBO assumes that each employee is responsible for his/her own self-direction and that external controls are not necessary to motivate the employee to complete work assignments.

The advantage of this system is that progress toward goal completion is easily monitored and corrective actions can be instituted early if challenges arise. The system is results-oriented and employees have a greater commitment to task completion because they participated in developing the tasks. MBO provides improved short and long term planning at all levels of the organization. It requires open communications and transmits the importance of achieving measurable results to everyone in the organization. MBO encourages effective performance by telling the employee what the organization wants to achieve and thereby reducing the likelihood that time and resources will be spent on unimportant tasks. The system is usually considered "fair" by those involved with it because organizational goals are known, the system is results-based, and the organization is paying the employee to produce results (Grote, 1996).

In order for MBO to be effective, management must have trust in the employee. If supervisors rely on making autocratic decisions, giving no responsibility or authority to the employee, the system is doomed for failure. There is a heavy investment in time required to meet with the employee to establish goals and to review work progress. MBO may also become

excessively results oriented. For example, if cutting costs in the maintenance department becomes a primary goal, personnel may be tempted to delay needed repairs that could lead to more costly equipment breakdowns in the future. An MBO system is not easy to create or easy to use. Organizational commitment is necessary for the process to work, this commitment manifests itself in the required training for everyone affected by MBO. Adequate personal incentives may not be provided to improve the desired performance because the emphasis is more on the benefits to the organization and scant attention is paid to the development of the employee (Grote, 1996).

This author concludes, that of the various types of appraisal systems available, the most useful to the Danvers Fire Department would be a combination of a performer-based and behavior-based appraisal program. Due to the fact that it would be extremely difficult to quantify expected results in emergency response situations, a results-based performance appraisal system would not be of any practical value. The variety of emergency scenarios cannot possibly be categorized. Then to have expected results assigned to them, except in the broadest possible terms, would be next to meaningless for evaluation purposes.

As only unionized personnel are to be evaluated within this program (non-union management personnel are evaluated under an existing MBO program), it will be most readily accepted by use of simple graphic ratings forms and checklists (See Appendix F). These forms and checklists were assembled to evaluate the employee on performance and behavior and not on results produced.

The Danvers Fire Department provides a service to the community, not a specific product that can be directly measured in terms of inputs equaling or exceeding outputs. It is recognized, therefore, that there are advantages and drawbacks to the evaluation system selected by the

Department. Some advantages are that there will be a two-way exchange of information, the rating form is easy to understand and simple to use and when all supervisors use the same form and all employees are rated in the same terms, comparisons will be easy to make. The challenges to be overcome are the fact that the appraiser's opinions and prejudices can still influence the rating and that factors on the rating form overlap, making the form difficult for the conscientious supervisor to use. Also, the form is rigid and will not give a complete picture of the employee (Halloran and Frunzi, 1986). The forced choice grading system makes it more difficult to provide for effective, constructive feedback and it usually is limited to mid-level management personnel (Armstrong and Lorentzen, 1982; Coleman & Granito, 1988). Despite these drawbacks, it is expected that the evaluation system will provide a solution to some of the earlier stated problems.

These problem areas include a lack of clearly defined job descriptions, poor communication between management and employees regarding work performance, the effect of evaluation on promotion, lack of training after promotion, and the lack of employee input. The evaluation system selected for use in the Danvers Fire Department addresses each of these concerns by including written job descriptions as part of the total evaluation package. The process provides for communication between the supervisor and employee with a formal method for appeal to the next administrative level if problems arise. Again, as part of the total evaluation process, job responsibilities, promotional considerations, and training are included as a basic part of the process. Employees were consulted and provided input from the beginning of the formulation of the system.

There is strong belief from all involved in this process that the Danvers Fire Department and its members will benefit greatly from the introduction of this Employee Evaluation Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From a review of both the problem statement and the data obtained during the course of this research project, it is clear that the establishment of a means of communications between management and employees should become a high priority item within the Danvers Fire Department. While there certainly may be other possible solutions, the establishment of an Employee Evaluation System will do much to alleviate many of the concerns of members and management. This solution will be beneficial in several ways; first, written job descriptions will be provided to department members. Each member of each rank (firefighter, lieutenant, captain, and fire prevention) will receive a job description and all the expected duties and responsibilities involved with that job description. Lines of communication will be opened between employees and management allowing an exchange of ideas and opinions. Scheduled meetings will take place between management and employees, where input from the employee will be received and discussed and management will be able to disseminate and explain information, policies, practices and procedures in greater detail. Internal communications are expected to improve due to the establishment of the Employee Evaluation Program.

The recommendations made include the creation of the previously discussed job descriptions, and the interviewing and the hiring of a professional evaluation trainer to train all department supervisors in proper evaluation techniques. This step is an obvious way to increase the effectiveness of any appraisal system. It is widely accepted that the need for evaluator training is necessary, but few organizations provide training for those being rated (Grote, 1996). The recommendation has been made that all members of the Danvers Fire Department undergo training to become familiar with the selected program. Another recommendation made to ensure successful implementation of the appraisal system is to have senior management personnel speak

to evaluators about the importance of and the value of the evaluation system (Grote, 1996). The involvement of all management personnel in the program is considered vital to the success of the program. It is also recommended to have greater personal on-the-job communication about work performance between the supervisor and employee. These will not be formal meetings but rather will take place in short, stand-up discussions at the workstation. There are strong arguments for giving the employee a voice in setting work performance standards. The standards become more realistic if they have been made by those who must meet and work with them daily. The psychology of participation makes for genuine acceptance of the standards and therefore a genuine effort to meet the performance standards can be expected (Juran, 1995). Managers will also conduct scheduled formal performance reviews, but it is believed that the daily interchanges will be very effective in increasing communications. These daily communications will also give the manager an opportunity to provide coaching to the employee about the "right way to do it" and allow additional opportunities for the employee to measure his/her success (Tompkins, 1997).

The final recommendation made, regarding the establishment of an employee evaluation system, is to create an on-going committee to annually review whatever evaluation system is selected. This review committee will be composed of management and union personnel and will meet after each evaluation period to discuss the evaluation process and suggest changes for the future if needed. A key feature of this or any other appraisal system is to have open communication and full participation from everyone in the organization.

According to Peter Drucker (1998, p. 143), "The single greatest challenge facing managers in the developed countries of the world is to raise the productivity of knowledge and service workers." By defining the task (providing job descriptions), concentrating work on the

task (setting goals), and defining performance (conducting evaluations) substantial growth in productivity can be achieved (Drucker, 1998). These are items that will provide the residents and visitors to the Town of Danvers a better and more productive fire department with fewer internal problems and greater communication between management and employee.

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APPENDIX A

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM

Employee Name_____   Title:_____

Department   Employee Payroll #_____

| Reason | Annual Promotion | Peer | Unsatisfactory |
| For Review | | Appraisal | Performance |

Rating:

O-Outstanding. Performance is exceptional in all areas and is recognizable as
  being far superior to others.
V-Very Good. Results clearly exceed most position requirements. Performance
  is of high quality and is achieved on a consistent basis.
G-Good. Competent and dependable level of performance. Meets performance
  standards of job.
I-Improvement Needed. Performance is deficient in certain areas. Improvement
  is necessary.
U-Unsatisfactory. Results are generally unacceptable and require immediate
  improvement.
N/A-Not Applicable or too soon to rate.

General Factors

1.   **Quality** – the extent to which an employee's work is accurate, thorough
         and neat.
         Rating_____
         Supportive Details or Comments:

2.   **Productivity** – the extent to which an employee produces a significant
         volume of work efficiently in a specified period of time.
         Rating_____
         Supportive Details or Comments:

3.   **Job Knowledge** – the extent to which an employee possesses the practical/
         technical knowledge required on the job.
         Rating_____
         Supportive Details or Comments:

4.   **Reliability** – the extent to which an employee can be relied upon
         regarding task completion and follow-up.
         Rating_____
         Supportive Details or Comments:

5.   **Attendance** – the extent to which an employee is punctual, observes prescribed work break/meal periods and has an acceptable overall attendance record.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

6.   **Independence** – the extent to which an employee performs work with little or no supervision.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

7.   **Creativity** – the extent to which an employee proposes ideas, finds new and better ways of doing things.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

8.   **Initiative** – the extent to which an employee seeks out new assignments and assumes additional duties when necessary.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

9.   **Adherence to Policy** – the extent to which an employee follows safety and conduct rules other regulations and adheres to company policies.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

10.   **Interpersonal Relationships** – the extent to which an employee is willing and demonstrates the ability to cooperate.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

11.   **Judgment** – the extent to which an employee demonstrates proper judgment and decision-making skills when necessary.
Rating_____
Supportive Details or Comments:

Rate employee's overall performance in comparison to position duties and responsibilities.

Total Points_____/Number of Factors Rated_____ = _____Overall Rating
____   Outstanding   100-90
____   Very Good   89-80
____   Good   79-70
____   Improvement Needed 69-60
____   Unsatisfactory Below 60

Additional Comments

1.	Accomplishments or new abilities demonstrated since last review.
2.	Specific areas of needed improvement.
3.	Recommendations for professional development (seminars, training, etc.)
4.	Attendance: Absent - # of days_____ Tardy - # of times_____

Manager Signature: _____   Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____   Date: _____

Employee Comments

Manager Signature_____   Date: _____

Employee Signature_____   Date: _____

APPENDIX B

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON
FIRE DEPARTMENT
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The enclosed Employee Performance Review Form is a tool to be used by you and your supervisor to evaluate your performance during the last year. This review is intended to provide you with an opportunity to speak directly with your supervisor about your performance and also to discuss future expectations.

During your interview your supervisor will discuss your performance strengths and areas which need improvement, your training needs, and work plans, timetables and goals for you during the upcoming year. At the conclusion of the interview, the supervisor will complete the Review Form and ask you to sign the Form to indicate that you have seen the information on the Form. The Review Form and all other data considered relevant will be returned to the department head for review and submission to the Town Manager's office.

Any employee who disagrees with the evaluation should sign the form to indicate that they have seen the evaluation. There is space on the form below for employee comments; you may also submit an addendum or request in writing for a re-evaluation from your department head. If you still disagree with the evaluation, you may request a re-evaluation from the Town Manager's office. Questions about the evaluation process may be directed to you supervisor, department head or Town Manager's office.

RATED BY: EMPLOYEE:

_____   A copy of this report has been
Name   reviewed and explained to me;
                                                                  my signature does not necessarily-
                                                                  indicate agreement.

_____
Title

_____
Date

        APPROVED:

_____   _____
Department Head   Signature of Employee

_____   _____
Date   Date

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE

FIRE DEPARTMENT

<u>Employee Performance Review Form</u>

Employee_____ Title_____

Evaluation Period_____

Attendance Record: Sick Days used_____   No. of Periods of Illness____

Safety Record: Days absent due to a job connected injury_____
                        Number of Job-Related injuries_____

A.   <u>Performance Rating</u>

Does the employee follow through on work orders?	1 2 3 4 5
Is equipment used properly?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee proficient in using a mask?	1 2 3 4 5
Does the employee ask questions when he/she does not understand how to do the job?	1 2 3 4 5
Does the employee have a good working knowledge of the streets?	1 2 3 4 5
Are vehicles driven safely?	1 2 3 4 5
Are the safety rules and policies adhered to?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the level of work produced consistent with the department's expectations?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee a self starter?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee courteous when dealing with other workers?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee courteous to the public?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee a cooperative worker?	1 2 3 4 5
Is the employee in uniform with neat appearance?	1 2 3 4 5

For Supervisory position only:

        Are crews ready for work immediately following
        roll call with gear and equipment ready?   1 2 3 4 5

        Is work planned in advance?   1 2 3 4 5

        Does employee strive to improve productivity
        i.e. review accident reports, check sick leave use?   1 2 3 4 5

A.   Performance Rating continued:

        Does the employee meet deadlines?   1 2 3 4 5

        Does the employee meet training objectives?   1 2 3 4 5

        Are communication skills utilized effectively?   1 2 3 4 5

        Are records and reports complete, accurate, and legible? 1 2 3 4 5

B.   Training

        Is the employee interested in additional or specialized training? Please list topics.

        _____   _____

        _____   _____

C.   The employee's major strengths are: _____

_____

D.   Goals for improved performance:_____

_____

E.   Other Comments: _____

_____

F.   For EMTS Only. EMT Comments: _____

G.   Overall Rating: 1   2   2+   3   3+   4   4+   5

APPENDIX C

Job Descriptions

Town of Danvers
Danvers Fire Department
Employee Evaluation Job Descriptions

The following job descriptions are provided as part of the overall Employee Evaluation Program to give a standard means of evaluation for all supervisors. The descriptions provided are general and are to be used as a guide for evaluators. They are by no means all-inclusive and may be amended as the evaluation program continues to be refined.

Firefighter Duties: A Firefighter often performs hazardous and strenuous tasks under emergency conditions. The firefighter works under supervision, frequently as a member of a team. The duties may be divided into several major areas: alarm response, general firefighting operations, ladder company operations, fire extinguishing operations, emergency life saving measures, equipment and apparatus maintenance, training activities, emergency medical service, routine station cleaning and maintenance, and inspection duties. Examples of job tasks involved in these major duties are as follows:

Alarm Response involves tasks such as receiving and verifying alarm information, selecting the best route to the emergency, driving apparatus, operation of the radio.

General firefighting operations involve tasks such as locating fires, cutting off fire extension, evacuation of occupants, and understanding and following oral orders.

Ladder company operations involve such tasks as performing searches, removing persons from entrapment, placing ventilation equipment properly, making forcible entry, and positioning and raising various ladders properly.

Fire extinguishing operations involves tasks such as laying, extending and reducing hose lines, operating nozzles and nozzle equipment, operating hydrants, using various hand tools, and operating power tools.

Equipment and apparatus maintenance involves tasks such as daily vehicle checks and/or periodic maintenance and replenishing and maintaining first aid equipment. Cleaning vehicles, hose repacking and replacing dated supplies and equipment.

Training activities involves tasks such as learning fire districts, learning the locations and purposes of all tools and equipment, and apparatus driver training. It also includes taking an active part in department and company drills on a scheduled basis.

Station activities involves such tasks as cleaning and maintaining quarters, communicating information to other shifts, and relaying orders from officers to firefighters.

Lieutenant Duties: Under supervision and in conformance with the rules and regulations of the Danvers Fire Department in such areas as the Fire Chief shall from time to time determine; to perform all duties assigned by a superior officer. Also, to supervise and instruct subordinates in firefighting activities and the maintenance of fire department property and equipment; to have immediate responsibility for directing all activities of a fire station on an assigned shift. Additionally, to have direct command over firefighters and responsibility for discipline and for the proper maintenance of apparatus, equipment and the station; to assume the duties of a

superior officer when a vacancy occurs due to illness, vacation leave or some other reason; to assume the duties of a superior officer in the event of an emergency which could not have been foreseen; to perform fire prevention work; and to perform related duties as required.

A Lieutenant will have knowledge in the following areas; Knowledge of the General Laws pertaining to the Fire Department, through knowledge of firefighting principals, practices and procedures including hydraulics, firefighting and life saving methods. Additionally he/she shall have thorough knowledge of equipment and techniques and ability to impart such knowledge in training programs; knowledge of the physical layout or geography of the municipality. He/she shall have the ability to maintain discipline and to obtain obedience to all laws, rules and regulations governing the fire department; ability to supervise, instruct, advise, direct and discipline subordinates in their duties, and in their association with one another requiring exercise of courteous demeanor and respectful manner, socially and officially; ability to observe, investigate, inspect, record findings and carry out oral and written instructions; ability to write reports; accountability and a sense of obligation and responsibility.

Captain Duties; Under supervision, initially to perform the duties of a Fire Captain in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Danvers Fire Department in such areas as the Fire Chief shall from time to time determine. This includes being in command of an assigned shift at the station, and to be responsible for the condition of all personnel and property therein, and the effective functioning thereof. Also, to see that all Department Rules and Regulations and Department Orders are obeyed. In the absence of the Fire Chief or Deputy Chief, to have full power to exercise the duties of the Fire Chief or Deputy Chief only in the event of an emergency which could not have been foreseen or relief. Additionally, to be in charge of all fires and other emergencies until relieved by a superior officer; to perform such other related duties and work as required by the Fire Chief and other superior officers.

A Captain will have knowledge in the following areas; Knowledge of the General Laws pertaining to the Fire Department, knowledge of the methods and procedures of administration and supervision of a fire department and ability in the practical application of such knowledge in exercising full authority in the position. A thorough knowledge of firefighting principals, practices and procedures including hydraulics, firefighting and life saving methods, equipment and techniques and ability to impart such knowledge in training programs. Knowledge of the physical layout or geography of the municipality; additionally, ability to maintain discipline and to obtain obedience to all laws, rules and regulations governing the fire department. An ability to supervise, instruct, advise, direct and discipline subordinates in their duties, and in their association with one another requiring exercise of courteous demeanor and respectful manner, socially and officially. Ability to observe, investigate, inspect, record findings and carry out oral and written instructions; ability to write reports and ability in personnel work; accountability and a sense of obligation and responsibility.

Fire Prevention Officer Duties: The department Fire Prevention Officer has primary responsibility for the establishment, further development, coordination and expansion of the department's fire prevention programs in both private and public sectors. Various firefighting duties will be performed as assigned. The Deputy Chief of the department provides supervision. Illustrative tasks include but are not limited to; Establish fire prevention programs, supervise in-service inspections by other department members instruct personnel in proper inspection techniques, perform various firefighting duties as required. Employee does not normally fill in

or is called back for employees engaged in fire suppression operations. He/she is responsible for the enforcement of Commonwealth of Massachusetts requirements, as they pertain to fire prevention. He/she will prepare forms and procedures for public dissemination and for in-house service purposes. Write reports and utilize appropriate follow-up procedures to insure that proper action is taken. Perform inspections of various buildings and facilities, including, but not limited to schools, houses of worship, hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, etc. at appropriate times, and forward required reports to federal, state and local authorities. Read, interpret, and apply information obtained from blueprints and related specifications pertaining building construction, fire alarm systems, and sprinkler systems. Draft and prepare written materials concerning fire prevention for distribution to the department, and Town and State officials, when required or requested. Investigate fire prevention complaints and take appropriate action. Investigate and report violations of local, state and federal law, rules, directive, or regulation to proper authorities. Supervise, instruct and advise others of their fire prevention duties as assigned. Engage in speaking programs for schools, service clubs, industry, etc… Respond to multiple alarms as required. Perform other related duties and responsibilities pertaining to fire prevention as assigned. Develop effective working relationships with the media and citizenry in regard to fire prevention activities.

Appendix D
Employee Evaluation Overview Guide

Town of Danvers
Danvers Fire Department
Employee Evaluations Overview Guide

General Considerations and Guidelines

The evaluation of an employee's daily work activities is an important means for management and the employee to ensure that continued high standards of performance are achieved. The intent of employee evaluation is to provide feedback to the employee about his/her level of performance in order to:

1. allow the employee to work towards improving any recognized deficiencies;
2. allow the employee to realize that the Department recognizes outstanding performance;
3. promote a feeling of confidence by the employee regarding the fairness and value of the process;
4. provide the Department with an accurate measure of employee performance for the purpose of ensuring qualitative and quantitative service to the Town of Danvers.

After all, as it has been written, "if you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?" If an employee doesn't know how he/she is performing, how will he/she know to perform better?

Procedures for Employee Evaluation

Once each year, each employee of the Danvers Fire Department will be evaluated. The employee's immediate supervisor (referred to as the Evaluator) will conduct the evaluation. This evaluation will be based on the position and assignment of the employee for the previous six- (6) month period. The Employee Evaluation Review Form (EERF) (see attached copy) will be filled out completely and signed by the Evaluator. The employee being evaluated will be given a copy of the form and called for a feedback session after the Evaluator completes the EERF. The employee will be given notice prior to the call back session. Upon satisfactory completion the EERF will be sent to the Deputy Chief for signature and placement of the form in the individual's personnel file. The areas to be evaluated and discussed include the following:

1. **Job Knowledge**: This factor measures the knowledge of accepted work practices necessary for satisfactory or above average performance of duties. Depending on the job, this factor may concern such elements as knowledge of operating procedures, necessary paperwork involved in the job, techniques or equipment involved in the performance of the job or other related tasks performed. This may include information secondary to the actual performance of the job, such as knowledge of street locations enroute to an emergency scene, etc.

2. **Quality of Work**: This factor measures the degree of accuracy with which an employee performs his/her work. It concerns such elements as attention to job procedures and reliability in meeting commitments.

3. **Quantity of Work**: This factor measures job productivity. It concerns the ability of an employee to complete his/her scheduled work.

4. **Adaptability**: This factor measures an employee's versatility and ability to cope with unfamiliar work. It concerns such elements as learning speed, ability and willingness to deal with new assignments, and interest in broadening job knowledge.

5. **Independence**: This factor measures an employee's ability to perform his/her job with a minimum of supervision. It concerns such elements as judgment, initiative, and ability to make decisions based on experience and skills.

6. **Work Relationships**: This factor measures an employee's ability and willingness to get along with peers, supervisors, and persons from the public and private sector that they come in contact with.

7. **Safety**: This factor measures an employee's attention to, and a willingness to follow, any safety procedures or details relating to their own job and to any other duties required of them. Also, the ability to recognize and to act on resolving any observed unsafe conditions

8. **Appearance/Neatness**: This factor deals with an employee's general appearance while on the job. It concerns such elements as cleanliness; personal grooming, neatness of clothing and wearing the prescribed Department uniform.

Additionally, the following areas will be completed for all supervisory personnel:

9. **Leadership**: This factor measures the supervisor's ability to communicate objectives, inspire motivation and teamwork and to build and maintain morale.

10. **Planning and Organization**: This factor measures the supervisor's ability to anticipate conditions, plan ahead, and establish priorities and meet schedules.

11. **Development of Subordinates**: This factor measures the supervisor's ability to give instruction and guidance, delegate effectively and attention given to evaluation and training.

Probationary Employee Evaluation: All employees of the Department shall have "Probationary Status" for the first twelve- (12) months of their employment or until they shall have completed the requirements for graduation from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. During this period their work will be evaluated on a quarterly basis, using criteria utilized for employees who are on Probationary Status.

Evaluator Responsibility: All supervisors who conduct employee evaluations have a responsibility to both the employee and Department to adhere to the following criteria throughout the process:

- a through knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of the employee(s)
- objectivity
- fairness
- impartiality
- documentation and
- disregard for previous performance problems, which did not occur during the rating period.

The evaluation shall be based strictly on rating the employee regarding the eleven- (11) categories listed. Personal feelings shall not enter into the process at any time.

Supervisors shall attempt to provide training and/or counseling to their subordinates as a means for improvement prior to invoking formal disciplinary proceedings.

When supervisors are being evaluated for job performance, their ability to make proper and fair evaluations of their own subordinates shall be considered, and this evaluation shall become part of the supervisor's record.

It shall be the responsibility of the Department to provide each supervisor (Evaluator) with training in how to conduct a proper performance evaluation on their subordinates.

For the purposes of this Employee Evaluation Program the following information about supervisory positions is to be used:
- Lieutenants supervise firefighters on their assigned apparatus and group
- Captains supervise Lieutenants assigned to their group and firefighters assigned to   Engine 1 and rescue 1 on the Captain's group
- Captains are supervised by the Deputy Chief
- Fire Prevention Officer is supervised by the Deputy Chief

Rating and Summary Evaluations: The Evaluator shall apply the following ratings to each category of the evaluation and to the overall summary evaluation:

1. **Outstanding**: Applies to performance that significantly exceeds expected results (specific details must be included with the form).

2. **Fully Satisfactory**: Applies to performance that exceeds expected standards.

3. **Satisfactory**: Applies to performance that meets expected standards.

4. **Needs Improvement**: Applies to performance that is lacking in one or more areas, but which is generally acceptable. This rating implies that the employee has exhibited the potential to perform at the Satisfactory level.

5. **Unsatisfactory**: Applies to performance that is significantly below average. This rating indicates that performance is unacceptable and warrants some sort of administrative action (specific details must be included with the form).

Prior to the beginning of a "Rating Period" it shall be the responsibility of the Evaluator to ascertain that the employee fully understands their job responsibilities and the evaluation process, including the fact a "rating" could occur at any time during the "Rating Period" if it is deemed necessary.

If an employee's performance is obviously being deemed as Unsatisfactory throughout the "Rating Period", the employee shall be notified in writing of this fact at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the reporting period by the supervisor. This notification will be placed in the employee's personnel file and will remain there until time of the formal evaluation.

Upon completion of the evaluation the Evaluator shall complete the Employee Evaluation Review Form and submit it to the Deputy Chief. The Evaluation Review Report will then be reviewed and signed by the Deputy Chief and a copy placed into the employee's personnel file.

Feedback/Counseling Session: Following review at the Deputy Chief's level, the Evaluator shall schedule a Feedback/Counseling session with the employee.   The employee may choose to comment in writing on the form, or on an attachment, concerning the entire evaluation or any specific area. The signature of the employee does not necessarily indicate his/her agreement with the evaluation only that he/she has read the evaluation report. A copy of the evaluation report will be given to the employee if so requested.

Review at the Deputy Chief's Level: The employee shall be afforded the opportunity to dispute the evaluation or any portion of it, by requesting a review with the Deputy Chief. It is the Deputy Chief's responsibility to determine whether the report is fair and accurate. The employee shall be provided with a copy of both the report and review (if applicable). Captains shall have the right of appeal to the Chief of the Department.

Utilization and Retention of Reports: Employee Evaluation reports shall be used by the administration to assist to identify areas that may require retraining, to help the employee determine personal career goals and objectives, to assist in the selection of employees for advanced training, and to aid in selecting employees for special assignments. Additionally they will become one of the factors considered for Civil Service promotions within the Danvers Fire Department. The evaluations will not be used to delay, deny or in any way prevent any Department member any contractual pay increase or incentive due them as negotiated by the Town of Danvers and Local 2038 Danvers Firefighters Association.

 Employee Evaluation Committee: A committee shall meet annually to review the entire process for the purpose of making improvements, which would enhance the efficiency of the process as a management tool and a positive indicator of performance levels. This committee will consist of three members appointed as follows: one member by the Fire Chief; one member by the President of Local 2038; and one member who is mutually agreed upon by both of the appointing authorities.

Attendance Review: A review of the employee's attendance record will be conducted by the Deputy Chief prior to the employee's evaluation. The attendance review will become part Evaluation Review and discussed with the employee by the Evaluator. The Deputy Chief will complete the attendance section of the Employee Evaluation Review Form.

Job Descriptions: To ensure that all Evaluators use the same standards for evaluations, job descriptions for each rank (Captain, Lieutenant, Firefighter, Fire Prevention Officer) are included as part of the Employee Evaluation Program.
These job descriptions are found in the Employee Evaluation Review Form Guide section.

 Employee Evaluation Form: the Employee Evaluation Review Form is attached as a separate document.

Appendix E
Review Form Guide

Town of Danvers
Danvers Fire Department
Employee Evaluation Review Form Guide

Part 1 – Job Performance

Employee Rating Instructions

Each factor in Part 1 is divided into descriptive phases indicating varying levels of performance. Evaluate each employee on those factors, which are relevant to his/her job. For each relevant factor circle the choice that more closely describes your observation of the employee's performance over the total evaluation period. Ratings should reflect an objective evaluation of the employee's actual performance rather than their potential. Each rating of "Outstanding" or "Unsatisfactory" **must** be accompanied by specific details attached on a separate sheet.

A   **Job Knowledge**: How well does the employee know the job?

5.   **Outstanding**: Exceptional and diversified knowledge, understanding of job and related tasks.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory**: Well informed on job and related work, rarely needs assistance and instruction but asks when it will save time.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Good understanding of job and related work.
2.   **Needs Improvement**: Knows job fairly well, regularly requires supervision and instruction. Shows desire to improve.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Limited job knowledge. Shows little desire or ability to improve.

B   **Quality of Work:** Consider accuracy, thoroughness and dependability in performing job duties correctly and completely

5.   **Outstanding:** Maintains high standards. Exceptionally accurate and thorough.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory**: Consistently accurate and reliable. Seldom makes a mistake.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Normally thorough with minimum of errors.
2.   **Needs Improvement**: Work is occasionally inaccurate or incomplete.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Errors/omissions are frequent.

C   **Quantity of Work:** Consider amount of work regularly produced; output.

5.   **Outstanding:** Produces an exceptionally large volume of work.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory:** Accomplishes more than required on consistent basis.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Output of work is sufficient for job requirements.
2.   Needs Improvement: Completes fewer assignments than normally expected.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Output of work is inadequate to meet requirements of job.

D   **Adaptability:** Consider ability to anticipate conditions and apply common sense to solution of problems.

5.   **Outstanding:** Exceptionally innovative in resolving simple to complex problems and coming up with new ideas.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory:** Strong, creative approach to problem solving and developing of new solutions
3.   **Satisfactory:** A solid reflection of what needs to be done and how to do it.
2.   **Needs Improvement:** Unable to function without having tasks clearly defined by supervisor
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Needs constant guidance.

E   **Independence:** Consider effort applied to assignments; seeking out assignments

5.   **Outstanding:** Self-starter consistently seeks additional responsibility and finishes work ahead of schedule.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory:** Accepts and carries out assigned responsibilities in consistent manner with minimum supervision.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Usually goes ahead on own judgment. Occasionally seeks added responsibility.
2.   **Needs Improvement:** Requires prompting to complete minimum requirements.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Wastes time. Does not seek work. Requires constant supervision.

F   **Work Relationships**

5.   **Outstanding:** Shows superior strength in developing relationships with people, encourages others to express their point of view.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory:** Very considerate, helpful and tactful in interacting with other people.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Deals with others in an appropriate manner. Adapts readily to changes in work environment.
2.   **Needs Improvement:** Tends to have difficulty working with others and following instructions of supervisor.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Frequently antagonizes those with whom employee comes in contact.

G   **Safety**

5.   **Outstanding:** Consistently practices, actively promotes safety on the job. Offers suggestions to improve safety, remedies unsafe situations immediately.
4.   **Fully Satisfactory:** Is familiar with safety rules and does not deviate from them.
3.   **Satisfactory:** Familiar with safety rules. Deviations are infrequent.
2.   **Needs Improvement:** Deviates from safety rules on the job. Exposes self to potential accidents or potential damage to tools or equipment.
1.   **Unsatisfactory:** Deviation from department safety regulations on the job. Causes or exposes others to serious accidents.

H   **Appearance**

5.   **Outstanding:** Uniform neat, well pressed. All insignia, name tag, badge and service pin(s) worn, shoes/work boots polished, etc.

4. **Fully Satisfactory:** Uniform neat, well pressed. Insignia, name tag, badge and service pin(s) usually in place and worn.
3. **Satisfactory:** Uniform worn. Insignia, name tag, badge and service pin(s) occasionally missing.
2. **Needs Improvement:** Uniform dirty, wrinkled. Insignia, name tag, badge and service pin(s) not worn/missing.
1. **Unsatisfactory:** Department uniform not worn.

Part 2 – Specific Skills

Complete for Supervisory Personnel Only

I   **Leadership**

5. **Outstanding:** Respected, inspiring leader. Generates unusually high degree of cooperation, productivity.
4. **Fully Satisfactory:** Motivates employees to perform effectively. Capable, consistent leader.
3. **Satisfactory:** Generally motivates employees to satisfactory performance.
2. **Needs Improvement:** Tends to be inconsistent in instructions. Has some difficulty exercising authority and control over subordinates.
1. **Unsatisfactory:** Unable to effectively direct work or command respect of subordinates. Has difficulty communicating objectives.

J   **Planning and Organization**

5. **Outstanding:** Consistently displays unusual flexibility in planning and coordinating work. Can be relied upon to be ahead schedule.
4. **Fully Satisfactory:** Versatile in approach to establishing priorities, dealing with changes and coordinating activities. Consistently can be relied on to meet schedule.
3. **Satisfactory:** Able to plan work schedules with assistance. Usually meets scheduled deadlines with little prompting.
2. **Needs Improvement:** Needs much assistance in planning work duties and schedules. Does not often meet schedule. Must be reminded to complete assignments.
1. **Unsatisfactory:** Supervisor cannot plan work assignments and does not complete assignments even after being reminded.

K   **Development of Subordinates**

5. **Outstanding:** Able to plan assignments to maximize employee performance and potential in an outstanding manner.
4. **Fully Satisfactory:** Effectively uses employee's capabilities and provides strong guidance to develop subordinates.
3. **Satisfactory:** Generally knows the capabilities of subordinates and makes assignments and delegates accordingly.
2. **Needs Improvement:** Has difficulty delegating responsibility effectively. Gives little attention to development of subordinates.
1. **Unsatisfactory:** Does not delegate responsibility. Pays no attention to development of subordinates

APPENDIX F
Review Form

Town of Danvers
Danvers Fire Department
Employee Evaluation Review Form

The following Employee Evaluation Review Form is a tool to be used by you and your supervisor to evaluate your performance during the evaluation period listed below. This evaluation review is intended to provide you with an opportunity to speak directly with your supervisor about your performance and also to discuss future expectations.   At the conclusion of the interview, your supervisor will complete the Employee Evaluation Review Form and ask you to sign the Form to indicate that you have seen and discussed the information on the form. The Review Form and all other material considered relevant will be turned in to the Deputy Chief for review and submission to the Chief of the Department.

If you disagree with the evaluation you should sign the Review Form and in the comment space provided add any comments you have about the review. Your signature does not mean that you agree with the review only that you have seen and discussed the evaluation with your supervisor. You may also submit a request in writing for a re-evaluation from your supervisor, if you still disagree with that evaluation, you may submit a request in writing to the Deputy (Chief, if a Captain is being evaluated) for re-evaluation. Any questions that you have regarding the evaluation process may be directed to your supervisor, the Deputy Chief, or the Chief of the Department.

Employee _____   Rank _____

Evaluator _____   Rank _____

Evaluation Period from _____   To _____

Employee: A copy of this report has been reviewed and explained to me: my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the evaluation.

_____
Employee signature   Date

Chief/Deputy Chief: This Employee Evaluation Review Form has been reviewed and signed by the employee and will be placed in their personnel file after it is reviewed by the Chief and Deputy Chief.

_____
Chief/Deputy Chief signature   Date

Employee Evaluation Review Form

Employee: _____

Evaluation period from _____   to _____

_____
The Deputy Chief will complete this section concerning attendance. The Evaluator will discuss
the attached Attendance Record with the employee.

Satisfactory   Needs Improvement
_____

Any rating of 5 or 1 must be accompanied by specific details attached on a separate sheet.

	Outstanding	Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
1. Job Knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
2. Quality of Work	5	4	3	2	1
3. Quantity of Work	5	4	3	2	1
4. Adaptability	5	4	3	2	1
5. Independence	5	4	3	2	1
6. Work Relationship	5	4	3	2	1
7. Safety	5	4	3	2	1
8. Appearance/Neatness	5	4	3	2	1

Supervisory Personnel Only

9. Leadership	5	4	3	2	1
10. Planning/Organization	5	4	3	2	1
11. Development of Subordinates	5	4	3	2	1

Employee's initials: _____   Date:_____

Employee Evaluation Review Form

Employee: _____

Evaluation period from _____ to _____

Supervisor's Comments:

I have personally reviewed and explained this Evaluation Review Form to the employee.

_____
Signature   Date

Employee's Comments:

I have read and understand this Evaluation Review Form.

Signature   Date